

# Malvern Prep outlasts Patriots, 24-21

Chris Downs gained 298 yards as the Friars took over sole possession of first place in the Inter-Ac League.

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As Malvern Prep's Chris Downs slithered through an opening and then spun off two defenders in yesterday's ultra-intense, Inter-Ac League football showdown, a Germantown Academy player voiced his disgust from the sideline.

"Tackle him!" pleaded the player. "Who is he, Superman?"

Well, maybe.

Downs didn't leap over any tall buildings in a single bound. But he did just about everything else.

Downs gained a career-high 298 yards on 38 carries, including a 73-yard touchdown run. The swift 5-foot-9, 175-pound senior also scored on an 87-yard kickoff return and triggered Malvern's crucial 24-21

win over the host Patriots.

With the win, Malvern (6-1 overall, 2-0 league) moved into sole possession of first place and took a major step toward its 13th league title in the last 19 years.

GA (5-2, 1-1), which hasn't won an Inter-Ac football title since 1973, faced a 24-7 deficit before scoring two touchdowns in the final 8 minutes, 34 seconds. The Patriots got to within 24-21 by scoring with 1:18 remaining, but Tony Downs — Chris' brother — ended the suspense when he leaped into the air and controlled Greg Davis' well-executed, ensuing onside kick.

In the first half, Malvern dominated, holding a 197-58 advantage in total yards.

And, as was the case in last year's

game between the teams, Malvern scored a touchdown in the closing seconds of the first half.

Malvern held a 3-0 lead when it took over on its own 5-yard line after a GA punt with 2:22 left in the half.

At the start of the drive, Germantown Academy called a time-out in the hope of getting the ball in good field position.

Instead, it was Malvern that took advantage, marching nine plays and scoring on a 13-yard pass from Shaun Gallagher (5 for 11, 65 yards) to 6-3 Ryan Edginton, who made a leaping grab over 5-10 defensive back Steve Sharkey in the left corner of the end zone with 11.7 seconds left in the half.

GA cut the deficit to 10-7 on an innocent-looking screen pass from Rob Heleniak (12 of 31 for 264 passing yards) to Matt Blewitt. Blewitt, who was held to 20 yards on nine

carries, caught the ball near the left sideline, made a nifty move to avoid two tacklers, then cut across the field and ended up diving into the end zone near the right sideline for an 85-yard TD play early in the third quarter.

But Chris Downs scored on an 87-yard return of the ensuing kickoff to make it 17-7. He added a 73-yard TD run to give the Friars a 24-7 lead early in the final quarter.

"It wasn't Downs that beats us — it was up front," GA coach Bill Caum said. "He's a good running back, but they were giving him a lot of room to run."

Malvern Prep	3	7	7	7	—	24
Germantown Academy	0	0	7	14	—	21

M: FG Millard 21

M: Edginton 13 pass from Gallagher (Millard kick)

GA: Blewitt 85 pass from Heleniak (Davis kick)

M: Downs 87 kickoff return (Millard kick)

M: Downs 73 run (Millard kick)

GA: Neve 4 run (Davis kick)

GA: Heleniak 6 run (Davis kick)

## 1997 MP 24 GA 21 article and box score

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